

# The Dungeon Master That Absolutely Won't Work Before Indulging in Laziness

Arc 25 - Rookie Hunting

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## Chapter 284: Rookie Hunting (1)

A certain man and woman adventurer couple arrived in Golen. They were a two person C-Rank group. The man was named Gesunoh, with the woman being Kiwami.

Gesunoh and Kiwami took pleasure in hunting those who were weaker than themselves.

*Hunting* meaning killing people and taking their possessions, of course. It was both their hobby and their source of income—around an 8:2 split.

Most of their targets were those people who'd just become adventurers and had only just started learning to some extent. There was no sweeter nor easier prey to hunt than a rookie, someone who was basically blind through ignorance or negligence.

But above all, the younger their targets, the better. They wouldn't have much money, but there were various other ways to have fun with them.

To put it bluntly, these two were sleazebags.

They'd been staying in Pavuera before then, but they'd started being tracked down after playing around a bit too much and had to escape. They had their sights set on two or three spots to move on to.

For them, they just took it as how a migratory bird would migrate depending on the season.

"So, darling, what do ya think we should do next?"

"Mmm, well, honey... we should find some young ones to be our *companions*."

The two would often try to work their way into parties with just three or less beginners, teach them a few things and get their trust, then kill them. They'd usually spend a few days doing it, but sometimes they wouldn't be able to hold back and do them in on the first day.

They chose groups with that number so they could kill one off and take another hostage to make them watch how they enjoyed themselves with the third. Depending on the situation, they might have to do stuff like kill off two at the same time or use paralytic poison on all three to do it one by one, but—

—The two making sure they had their fun before the kill was just their style... Specifics will be left out.

Which is why they'd found Golen to be a perfect place to come along. There was a dungeon filled with things too good for newer adventurers to pass up, such as the iron golems, so there were always tons of people coming and going. As it was a new village, it didn't even have a gatekeeper. It was a great place for criminals to hide out in.

There was a ton of prey, it wasn't strange for newcomers to suddenly appear, and best of all, the dungeon would take care of whatever corpses they'd leave behind.

The more they'd heard about Golen, the more they felt like it was a great place. It was a village made especially for them.  
... Is what they thought.

The first thing they did after arriving at the village was head to the guild branch office. Other than the veteran adventurers aiming to hunt iron golems, there were tons of delicious-looking rookies. However, their current objective was to inspect the dungeon. They would get a look at the dungeon map and find places that seemed like there wouldn't be many people—that is, places they could play around in. They decided to split up in order to collect information. Gesunoh's goal was to learn about the **hunting grounds**, and Kiwami's, the **prey**. Gesunoh walked to the newer looking of the two behind the counter. He spoke amiably, showing his C-Rank guild card and behaving gentlemanly.

“Hey, Receptionist-san. Is there a dungeon map?”  
“There is one for the first floor only. Viewing it is five copper coins, while purchasing a copy is ten copper coins.”  
“Just the first floor?”

He paid eleven copper. One was a tip. Five copper to inspect the map was cheap. In other words, although it wasn't too big of a floor, there should at least be some information on the following

floors.

“The second and third floors are mazes, so as the path changes frequently, a map cannot be made for it. Although it is possible to get a feel for the rough direction you need to go for the staircase, it is hard.”

“Heeeh...”

“If you would like to view a map that shows only the fixed traps and the stairway’s positions, that is ten copper coins. Thirty to purchase one.”

This time, he paid the thirty coins to buy the map.

... All that was drawn on the good quality paper map was a rough outer edge, a protruding room, and the position of the staircase.

There was a cautionary mark on the protruding room.

“What’s this room? It says a Safety Zone... trap?”

“That is the [Avarice Trap]. Um—”

This information didn’t appear to have a cost to it, as she readily told him. Gesunoh thought to himself that it would be better off written down on the map in the first place.

The [Avarice Trap] was something like a room that was itself entirely a trap. It had a pedestal with a magic sword stuck in it. Upon pulling the sword out, it would lock down—however, you could leave after returning the magic sword to the pedestal. It was only a prison for avaricious people, those who couldn’t put the magic sword back.

... Hearing this, Gesunoh couldn’t help but smile.

A room that locked down—a room they could do whatever they wanted in.

“Oh, thanks. I’m off, then.”

“Take care.”

Getting all the information he needed from the receptionist, Gesunoh went and joined up with Kiwami, who’d gathered some information from separate adventurers.

“What’s up, honey? Find out anything good?”

“Yeah, darling. I heard about a blue-haired kid being brought by a blonde elf to register as an adventurer. There was a dog beastkin slave too.”

“Any good men?”

“They were all women, so cute I just wanted to gobble them up—and they were all dressed up nicely, even the slave, they’ve got to be something like a rich girl, her escort, and her pet. How’d it go on your end, darling?”

“Ah, well I did hear about a place that sounds amazing. I’m thinking we should go to check it out right now even.”

With that, the two headed right into the dungeon. The goblins couldn’t match up to them at all. They headed straight for the [Avarice Trap].

They’d memorized the map, so they quickly found it even with various walls getting in their way.

Just as he’d heard, upon taking the sword out—the entrance was blocked by thorns.

“What do you think, great right?”

“It’s so amazing! But it looks like sound can make it through that entrance? I think screams would make it through.”

“Girls screaming really does carry pretty far huh... yeah, we’ll just cave their throats in first!”

“We could even watch the dungeon eat them up after we kill them if we bring them here.”

The two snickered.

“It’s such a good place, how about we get a bit of exercise?”

“Fufu, sure, darling... is what I’d like to say, but how about we save it for our prey?”

“Unfortunate, but if you say so... I’m looking forward to it. Haaah, I can’t wait to make that rich girl drink the slave’s piss. She should be able to keep it down since it’ll be from her cute pet, yeah?”

“Ufu, I’m sure that she’ll be pleased to tears.”

Then, stopping at a kiss, the two began to search for their prey. That is, for the three women that would fill their wallets and provide them with endless fun.

The child and slave would obviously be rookies, so they wouldn’t matter at all.

The bottleneck in their plan was the blonde elf.

The blue-haired child and the elf were very likely an aristocrat and her escort.

That being the case, the elf should have some level of skill to her.

They would need to act buddy-buddy with them to gain more information.

“Now then—let’s plan this out. For our fun future!”

“For our fun future!”

## Chapter 285: Rookie Hunting (2)

The next day, Gesunoh and Kiwami found their targeted group of three in the guild and immediately struck up a conversation with them.

They were all smiles with them.

“Yo, you guys! Wanna merge parties with us? I’m Gesunoh, a C-Rank.”  
“Ufufu, and I am Kiwami. Also a C-Rank.”

Showing their guild cards, they addressed the blue-haired young lady and the blonde elf who were sitting on a chair. The dog beastkin was standing next to the two of them, but as a slave without any say-so, they ignored her.

It seemed to them that the guild grew a bit noisy now that they’d addressed the group.

Maybe they were people who were also looking to butter up to them?

They were idiots, the early bird gets the worm, particularly here, where they’d heard news of a particularly famous lady killer that preferred them young. After finding out about that person, Gesunoh decided the best way to go for them was to do it quickly. He cackled inwardly.

“U-Us? Umm, I-I don’t mind, but why?”

“What? You guys’re obviously rookies yeah? I just thought we, as your seniors, should team up.”

“Ojou-sama, are you sure? There are other adventurers here that seem more reliable.”

“Umm, but they’re C-Rank adventurers and they seem fine with us?”

Unexpectedly, the young lady was interested. Accordingly, Gesunoh accelerated his plans a bit.

“See? The Ojou-sama’s on board, so what about you, Beautiful Elf-san?”

“Don’t worry about it. We’ll be safe, Darling’s here.”

“Hmm...”

“Shina, it’ll be fine.”

“If you say so, Ojou-sama, I won’t speak against it anymore... However, I will not forgive you if you do anything to Ojou-sama!”

Gesunoh smiled wryly at the elf's glare.  
Smiling, the young lady gave a small bow.

"Please call me Mai. And she's Shina.... Th-This girl's our... p-pet, yeah, our pet! Ehehe."

The black-haired dog beastkin had its head pat, its face expressionless. Mai, the one patting its head, was smiling foppishly.

*She's treating it almost like a human with those clothes on her.*  
Gesunoh thought to himself.

"... Looks like everything's falling in place huh, Darling."

Kiwami whispered so that only Gesunoh could hear her. She was looking at the dog beastkin's tail.

Kiwami knew that a beastkin—dog beastkin in particular—would wag their tails if they were emotionally attached to their owners.

A surprising percentage of even those slaves who were well-dressed and well-treated by their owners would harbor grudges against them.

In any case, a master often didn't consider what their slave wants. When that happened, a slave would likely hope for their master to fall destitute or be attacked, [Leaving] them to be injured or killed.

Since there was an equal danger to their life between a sword pointed at them and the collar on their necks, the person they'd listen to varies depending on the slave. If they'd die either way, they'd generally go after the person they hated. That's just how things went.

"So then, Mai Ojou-sama. Shall I escort you to the dungeon?"

"Well, umm, before that, could we go to the church to pray? I haven't gone to pray yet this morning."

"The church? ... Yeah, sure, I don't mind."

Saying that, Mai got down from her chair and headed to the exit. The slave followed just after her, with Shina staying between Gesunoh and Kiwami and the Ojou-sama.

Gesunoh and Kiwami followed after them out of the guild.

One of the adventurers there that saw it happen stealthily spoke to the



receptionist.

“—It’s going as the village chief said, huh.”

“It is.—So, next is—”

Neither Gesunoh nor Kiwami heard this happen.

Gesunoh and Kiwami decided to wait outside while the young lady prayed in the church.

It was because they understood that humans such as themselves couldn’t stand before a god—not. It was because they were called over by a beautiful sister. Kiwami’s expression warped a bit when it happened, but she decided to not mind it and treat this as intelligence gathering.

“So you were in Pavuera before this?”

“Yeah. I may not look like much but I’m pretty good, I’ve never missed snatching my prey. Sister, do you dislike adventurers?”

“Not at all, the god of adventurers, White Goddess-sama, and our Beddhism are very close to each other. With that, I have no reason at all to dislike adventurers.”

“This is the first time I’ve heard of Beddhism, what are its teachings? What kind of god does it have?”

“In truth, Beddhism believes in no god.—And its teachings are simple. Sleep, rest, value those above all, as well as never disturbing another’s. Saying that is all is no exaggeration.”

Seeing the sister smile erotically, Gesunoh gulped. It was because he was impairing others’ rest—not. It was just because the sister was charming.

“So how about it, want to go with us into the dungeon next time?”

“Oh? Are you sure you should be saying that in front of your girlfriend?”

“Ufufu, a good man *is* resourceful, after all. Darling wouldn’t be satisfied just by little old me, he needs two or three more to prey on!”

“I’ll accompany you next time if I have the chance. I did hear about some of the sisters wanting to register as adventurers...”

Seeing Gesunoh ogle her, Kiwami thought having the sister be their next prey wasn’t too bad of an idea.

“Sorry to have kept you two waiting.”

Mai Ojou-sama and the the others returned while they were talking. Their expressions changed quickly, as though they were other people.

“Now then, Gesunoh-sama, shall we go? Will you escort me this time?”

“Yeah, of course. Well then, sister, till next time.”

“Yeah... Have a nice rest, Good Night.”

As the sister said that and with a smile and moved her fingers around in a circle (like a shrine monk), Gesunoh took the young lady's hand and led her, his prey, into the dungeon.

They would soon be at their hunting ground.

## Chapter 286: The Dungeon Master Was Listening

Oi, I heard you guys.

The heck? You're planning on hunting rookies?

I was checking out the dungeon's state of affairs for the first time in a while out of curiosity since it's been a pretty long time since anyone had used the [Avarice Trap], but then there was a bunch of whispering going on. Curiosity got the best of me and I just started eavesdropping.

And then I heard their discussion about rookie hunting. Hahaha, too bad for you two.

They're wanting to target Maidence, Shikina, and even Meat. Judging by what they were saying, they're planning on doing stuff that'd need an R-18 tag on it. That's a huge no-no for Rokuko and Meat's education.

I happened to see Maidence say that she was wanting to become an adventurer like 'Kuro-sama' since she was her fiancée, so it appears that she'd decided on bringing Shikina and Meat as escorts to make a three-person party.

... I don't think I would've bothered doing anything if they just chose people that had nothing to do with me, haha.

Maaaaan those two are shit out of luck.

First off, they declared they'd be killing the village's resident adventurers. Not only was that picking a fight with me as the village's chief, but also with me as the dungeon's master since it would take away from my regular DP income. That's their first OUT.

I'd let them live if that was all. (I didn't say I'd let them be uninjured.)

Next, among those they targeted was an aristocrat's daughter who I'm keeping a watch over. That'd obviously bring more crap my way. Besides, they're wanting to do it in the dungeon, they're obviously intending to blame it on the dungeon right? You're kidding me. With that, that's two OUTS.

If that was all, I'd leave them their lives. (I didn't say I wouldn't make them prefer death.)

But what they really screwed up on was targeting Meat, my hug pillow. Guess

I'll have to have them die. Fufufu. Please repent, okay?

So because of all that, I decided to inform the guild.

... I mean, it'd be alright if I did it myself, but if a C-Rank who'd been properly collecting information about the dungeon just up and disappeared, that'd raise alarms.

For example, if they didn't return after telling the guild something like how they'd just be checking around the safer parts today, that'd seem off.

It's not like it would be *too* troublesome to wrap it all up myself, but letting the guild know to bury them in a legal sense is a lot easier.

So I decided to prepare by reporting that I got the feeling they're trying to hunt rookies! It's just their fault that the rookie they picked will be flipping the tables on them!

Proof won't be needed! Because it'll be from an accident in the dungeon!

Well, in short, I'm just laying the groundwork.

With all that, I went to the guild, leaned up against the counter and told the usual Receptionist-san we needed to have a word.

"... Which is how I wound up hearing them talk about hunting rookies, but what can we do? I think they're aiming for Mai-sama and Shikina since they're nobles, and I think that'd be a big problem~"

"Yes, I understand. How do you wish to handle it, then?"

"Eh? Ummm, we couldn't go for capital punishment, could we? I mean since they're repeat offenders and all..."

"Understood. I will leave taking care of them to you, Kehma-sama. I will prepare it so that those two adventurers' assets will be frozen."

"Eh?"

"I would like to use whatever they have stored within the guild as compensation for their victims' bereaved families, so I would be thankful for any amount of information you can get from them. I understand that it isn't your responsibility for that, though, so if you aren't able to, you don't need to worry about it."

"Eh? Umm, excuse me—"

"... Is there a problem?"

Err, how should I put it? This is going way, way faster than I'd planned.

Is it alright for us to go on like this without her checking the facts? Doesn't she think I'm lying at all?—Wait, maybe she was using a lie detecting magic tool under the counter?

Even so, wouldn't it be necessary for her to question them first?

"Umm, isn't this going way too fast? Don't you need evidence first or something?"

"No. Although you haven't prepared any evidence, we have your testimony, am I correct?"

"Yeah."

"Which allows for capital punishment to be allowed."

"Yeah, well..."

"... .."

"... Eh? Wait, hold on, just by having my testimony?"

"Yes?"

Even if she was using a lie detecting magic tool under the counter, I still think she'd need confirmation or evidence. There's even the possibility of me having made a mistake.

"... Would you prefer for me to explain?"

"Oh, yeah. Please."

When I responded to Receptionist-san, she just sighed as though she really didn't want to.

"First of all, Kehma-sama, you are the [Village Chief]. Putting it more directly, were you aware that as the person in charge of this village, you hold judicial authority here."

"Yeah, well... you put it a bit harshly there..."

So it's not that I don't hold authority despite being a figurehead...?

"Having a village chief's testimony is enough to close the trial immediately. So, as I, the person responsible for the guild side of things, have confirmed your judgment, all that is left is their execution."

"Haaah, so that's how it is?"

In other words: [Hey you, you're going to die since the most influential person and the people in charge of you agreed on it.]

... The heck! This world takes lives so easily!

Well, this is a world where you can buy people for a single gold coin (around a million yen), so that's just the way it is here. I mean, Ichika was just fifty silver...

"Also, could I borrow your ear for a moment?"

"Eh? Okay."

I lent her my ear to hear what she wanted to say confidentially.

Then, with a voice quiet enough to not be heard by others around us—

"... Kehma-sama, as an aristocrat, you could easily bestow punishment on your word alone if it's simply for two common adventurers."

... No waaay~!?

So that's how it all actually went.

An [Aristocrat (Me)] decided to punish two common adventurers.

An [Aristocrat (Me)] recommended capital punishment. Furthermore, the [Chief Executive (Me)] proclaimed their sentence was appropriate.

Simultaneously, the [Judicial Authority (Me)] decided their sentence to be appropriate and confirmed its decision with the adventurer's guild. As there were no contradictions or discrepancies between the testimonies given by an [Aristocrat (Me)], the [Chief Executive (Me)], and the [Judicial Authority (Me)], the person responsible for the adventurer's guild deemed the judgment valid. The primary reasons being due to the testimonies given by the [Chief Executive (Me)] and an [Aristocrat (Me)].

The [Chief Executive (Me)] requested to carry out the punishment.

Now what follows is simply to carry it out.

Right. So as long as I out someone's crime even if it wasn't rookie hunting like this, so long as I don't lie, they're screwed?

Even a figurehead chief like me could be seen as an aristocrat dictator.

I definitely can't just go and lightheartedly say someone should die... so this is power, huh? It's scary!

"... Umm, why do you know I'm an aristocrat?"

“That is something I cannot answer due to a duty of confidentiality.”

Hmph. So was it Sally-san? Or maybe there was some story passing through this guild about it having a more reliable backing after the aristocrat listing was made? It could’ve been Haku-san herself doing something, too...

Wait, even if this is because of Haku-san, there’s not much of a reason for me to care about how she got her information, huh.

Well, me getting the guild’s cooperation is convenient.

... No way, was that last thing Sally-san mentioned meaning Receptionist-san? Let’s be cautious.

“I am even aware about your two cards. You have many exceptions surrounding you, so please align yourself into being solely B-Rank as soon as you can. Have you taken the examination?”

“... Haah, I’ll consider it.”

I didn’t commit myself to it. I have no intention of publicly becoming a noble. ... Oh, but Meat showed her B-Rank card to the lord huh~. What should I do about that?

“By the way, about the rookie hunters, do you know what their modus operandi is?”

“Oh, if that’s all—”

I gave away their modus operandi. Well, that’s just a service for her. ... Now then, how am I going to go about disposing of them? I should get them to give up as much information about their victims as possible...

## Chapter 287: Hunting Preparations

Something a bit unexpected happened, but it looks like I'll be able to deal with them how we want.

... Letting the dungeon's darkness bury them sounds good.

It's not as though I'm exposing Maidence and Shikina to danger. Among the things Rei enhanced herself with was the [Illusion] skill. It was an ability that allowed you to show illusions to another. She hadn't used it at all since enhancing herself, so I figured now was a good chance.

"If we use your [Illusion] skill to make two body doubles, how long will they last?"

"Err, using it to make body doubles? It would be different if it was just for the two of them to see it, but having a lot of people see it would be impossible... sorry."

"Huh? Rei, your illusions aren't like disguises, but are more like targeted hallucinations?"

"... Ummm, I don't get it too well myself yet, but it doesn't work if there are a lot of people there to see it—it gets undone. It's fine if it's just one person, but it gets hard with two others. I *might* be able to deceive maybe five people at the same time?"

What's up with that? Is it that this world identifies phenomena by when they are observed, so that if there are a lot of observers, you need a relative increase in power to maintain the illusion? Mmm, I'm not sure. It does sound like it has some crazily annoying requirements though.

At any rate, I guess I should just remember that she can't use it in front of a lot of people at once.

"Oh, I can use it even if there's a lot of people if I have them disappear!"

"I see. People wouldn't be viewing them if they'd disappeared, after all."

Based on that, yeah, looks like I can use it.

"So you can do it if there's two people?"



“I can! ... Ah, but they’ll be found out if they get touched, they’re just air. Having something for them to cover would be good. If you could lend me a golem.... but maybe they’d be too hard?”

“... Maybe we could trick them if we have them wear gloves wound in thin cloth? And dress them up?”

Luring them from the guild where there’s so many people looks to be impossible, so I guess we’ll do it in the cave?

I’ll have to have Maidence and Shikina wait in the inn until it’s safe though. Maybe I should call for them for a chat?

“Ah, umm, Master? There’s another thing that’ll be a problem for using illusion...”

“What?”

“I can’t reproduce a body with [Illusion] unless I’ve properly memorized the person’s body, so what if I could give them a full body massage... or something? Ah, but even then I think the limit I can remember them is a day...?”

“... So we’ll need their cooperation. Got it. Well, please call for them and Meat.”

I asked her to get Maidence, Shikina, and Meat. Rei left the room, immediately returning with all three of them.

Maidence’s maid didn’t come in, but she was standing outside the door.

“Umm, Kehma-sama. You wanted to talk?”

“I heard that it is related to me as well. Is it about Beddhism?”

“... Pillow related?”

Looks like Rei didn’t tell them anything.

And Meat, there’s no way I’d do something as scary as ask them about anything hug pillow related, yeah?

I should get this moving.

“Let’s see, from here on out I’ll be speaking as the village chief... Violent criminals have come into the village. They are adventurers belonging to the adventurer’s guild, but they are murderers who hunt rookies.”

Immediately after I spoke, Shikina’s eyebrows knit together and Maidence grew serious. Meat remained as expressionless as usual.

... Maidence’s reaction was a bit surprising. It wouldn’t be surprising for young

ladies like her to grow pale after hearing that, but she just held the brave gravity of a person placed above others.

It looks like I won't have to watch my words for her in this.

Since Shikina would follow my orders and Meat would do anything I said, I just need to focus on speaking to Maidence here.

I faced toward her.

"This is a horrible turn of events. Kehma-sama, what will you do with them?"  
"Capital punishment. They appear to have targeted a certain group of three individuals, so I was hoping that Shikina you, Mai-sama, could wait it out in the inn while I take care of them."

"How could I just sit and watch, I would like to be of help! —And why is Kuro-dono alright!?"

"Keep quiet, Shikina. I'm talking with Mai-sama right now. And Kuro is strong, that's why it is alright."

"So I am weak...!?"

"Shikina, you are weak against surprise attacks, exactly what these criminals specialize in. Even if you are vigilant, they could catch you off guard. If you understand me, quiet down."

"... Ugugu, it's vexing, but you're right. As expected, Master understands me... *thoroughly*."

What's with that *thoroughly* bit? And stop blushing. I'm ignoring you now, ignoring you!

Shikina managed to take my attention away, so I faced Maidence again.

"I would like to apologize for any inconvenience this gives you, but there is something I would like your cooperation in."

"I don't mind... but how can I help?"

"If you want to help and don't mind skipping the details, I'd like Shikina and you to receive a full body massage from Rei."

"... Umm, I don't follow?"

Right? I'd tilt my head and not understand how receiving a full body massage would help with catching criminals if I were in her position either. Only Maidence would have the blue curls to shake like that though.

“Sorry, it’s a requirement for a skill. Rei will be using her [Illusion] skill, so I intend to have her create body doubles. However, the skill isn’t something quite so convenient as to be readily usable... she must massage someone’s body and will be able to reproduce it for up to a day afterwards.”

“So that is the reason? I understand.”

“Moreover, since it can’t be used in front of many people, we will have to wait to encounter them in the dungeon.”

By the way, me talking so explicitly about Rei’s skill here is so that I won’t use it poorly in the far future and so that I can declare that it can’t be misused. It would’ve been better if it was a lie and I could abuse it though.

“... I see, alright.”

“Ooh! Then let’s—”

“—But Kehma-sama. This means that they will be going into the dungeon?”

“Eh? Well...”

“Forcibly arresting them as soon as you detected them would have been fine, but I assume that you going through with this roundabout measure is to keep this from alarming the public?”

Crap, I could’ve done that! ... Not, I wanted to go through the proper steps just in case. Yep.

Another problem is my confidence in it. Unless I show that they actually hunt rookies, I might end up as being seen as offhandedly forcing punishment on innocent people.

... Let’s just say it’s my own selfishness.

“In that case, I think it would be best for us to temporarily act as decoys to lure them into a dungeon, then seize them there.”

“... You have a point, but there is no denying the possibility of the danger that that would put you and Shikina, aristocrats, into. You may even be taken as hostages.”

“... I’d like to help Kuro-sama, my fiance.”

Maidence just stared at me fixedly.

I guess I can put her to use if she really wants to? I can put something out through the adventurer’s guild as a nominated commission.

“In that case, please catch their attention in the guild and lure them out to the church. I will tell the church about it beforehand, so we will switch you out for your decoys there. Sound good?”

The criminals shouldn't want to make their move inside the village, so it should be fine. Moreover, Maidence also seemed pleased with the plan and nodded in agreement. Shikina, however, interrupted.

“Master! Use me too, me too!”

“... Can you do the act?”

“... .. I-I'll do my best!”

Well, Rei wouldn't be able to use her illusion inside the guild at all anyway, so let's have Shikina get a bit of experience in that too.

“Alright, I'll allow it.”

“Yay! Mai-dono, I will do my best!”

“Yes, let's give it our all, Shikina-sama!”

The two of them shook hands. Good luck.

Also, when I was telling them the gist of their performance—when I mentioned that Meat would be Maidence's pet, Maidence seemed overly worked up about it and blushed furiously. Well, let's not look too much into that.

With all appearances set up, time to work on preparing what'll actually happen.

Also also, she had to memorize the feeling of their clothes as well, so I had them lend their clothes along with the massage... but I could only see Rei as a pervert after seeing her smell their clothes and rub it against her cheeks like that. Let's keep that bit a secret.

... I mean, she really was being serious about it. She was smelling the clothes like a wine taster would sample wine.

## Chapter 288: Rookie Hunting (3)

“Well then, want to head right into the dungeon?”

“Yes, thank you, Gesunoh-sama, Kiwami-sama.”

They went into the dungeon, led by Kiwami as their scout. Mai, the blue-haired young lady, set foot into the dungeon—yet still, she was more calm than Gesunoh had thought she would.

He wished she would have at least been excited for entering a dungeon for the first time. Maybe she was just good at concealing her expressions?

“Ojou-sama, have you been inside a dungeon before?”

“Yes, I asked Shina to show me around a little yesterday. Well, we turned back after seeing the second room though.”

*Oh, so she’s already been into a dungeon before?*

Gesunoh thought to himself, now understanding why.

This dungeon was particularly special, it was a dungeon you could enter with even a G-Rank in your party, or even a party of F-Rank adventurers. Though if you wanted to enter with a G-Rank, your party would need to have a person in it of at least D-Rank to be allowed in.

“Shina’s here too, a dungeon like this should be an easy thing.”

“Ojou-sama, please don’t let down your guard. Dungeons are dangerous places, okay? ... Gesunoh-san, Kiwami-san, please say something to Ojou-sama as well.”

The topic had suddenly shifted, but Gesunoh and Kiwami just smiled. This young lady being so cocksure would only serve to make it easier on them.

“Oh no no, it’s as our Ojou-sama says. A low difficulty dungeon like this is so easy that even beginners are allowed to delve into it. We’ll be able to manage even without you two worrying about anything.”

“Right? That’s why darling and I are here.”

Kiwami winked at Mai. Having great timing, two goblins appeared and attacked them. Gesunoh made quick work of them, defending Mai and Shina as they’d declared.

Even with their rotten core, they were still C-Ranks. Mere goblins would never

best them.

“Amazing work. Don’t you agree, Senpa—Pet-chan?”

“...”

The pet beastkin looked on with cold, expressionless eyes.

*... She didn’t even look at the young lady. As I thought, the two of them don’t get along well.*

Kiwami was convinced of it.

“I-I want to give a reward to Gesunoh-sama after doing such amazing work. Please accept this.”

Saying that, Mai pulled a silver coin out from her [Safe] and handed it to Gesunoh.

“Haha, I’ll keep it as a good luck charm.”

*How much money does she have in there?*

Not skipping a beat and still keeping a smile on his face, Gesunoh started thinking about how things stored inside containers created by space-time magic —[Safe] for example—would spill out if the caster died.

“Oh? I don’t get any?”

“The person who defeated the goblins a moment ago was Gesunoh-sama though? Kiwami-sama did nothing. Right, Shina?”

“Yes, Kiwami had done nothing. Rewarding a person who simply stood and watched would be wasteful.”

*Tch, f\*cking amateur bitch.*

Hearing her say that, Kiwami cursed her out in her mind. In fact, Kiwami had noticed the goblins ahead of time and closed off their path of retreat while Gesunoh took care of them.

However, that could also mean that Shina took her to be a useless individual and may lower her guard a bit more.

Though besides, speaking entirely in terms of how little someone had done, Shina was the most useless as she’d only stood next to the young lady the entire time.

... They preferred enjoying themselves with people that were still alive, but it

wasn't exactly a requirement. They could still have fun with someone after they'd killed them.

"Darling, could you give me that? I'm going to embed it into her with [Healing] after cutting the tendons of her arms and legs. We'll do the young lady on her like that and kill her later."

"Kukuku, as expected of my honey. That's a great idea. Let's slice up this Ojou-sama with the sword in there."

Gesunoh and Kiwami spoke to each other in whispers so that the other two wouldn't hear them.

"Well then, how about we check out a bit deeper in? I heard about an interesting room at the guild. Wanna try it? Not like there'll be any trouble with us here."

"Yes, please guide us."

"Ojou-sama, I do not believe that we should go any further in, it is dangerous."

"Be quiet, Shina. We have Gesunoh-sama here, a C-Rank. There won't be any problems."

"..."

The beastkin pet sighed, her eyes still cold.

Making their way through the first floor, they finally made it into the labyrinth area. Even there, they didn't come across any major enemies. Although it did have iron golems in it, all they came across were clay golems. They were cleaned up about as quickly as the goblins.

Although there was a labyrinth, they easily made their way through it using the map's help and quickly came upon their goal—the [Avarice Trap].

Gesunoh and Kiwami entered first, followed by Mai and Shina after being invited in.

Kiwami approached the pedestal with the sword in it. With everyone in the room—Gesunoh standing in the rear—she pulled out the sword.

Shortly afterward, they heard a noise and the entrance was blocked by needles.

"Crap! We're shut in!"

Gesunoh spoke with a forced tone.

“!? Wh-What happened?”

“Wh-What is this?”

The lady and her escort reacted in similar ways. Their behaviors were so alike that it was like they were connected by strings. Seeing them like that, Gesunoh grinned.

It looked like the ladies hadn't collected any information about this room. It would have been somewhat annoying had they known about it.

“Gesunoh-sama, what is going on?”

“Don't worry about it, Ojou-sama. In truth, after pulling that magic sword out of its pedestal, the room will lock itself down for a single night. It is a safety zone, there is no danger.”

“Just one night?”

“Yes. We will rest here and return tomorrow in the morning.”

Gesunoh smiled as warmly as he could to reassure the lady.

“Is that so?”

She appeared to be convinced.

“However, you unilaterally deciding our schedule is troubling. We haven't prepared to camp?”

“I am sorry for that. Don't worry, though. We have prepared accordingly, including enough for the Ojou-sama, of course.”

With that, Gesunoh invoked [Storage] and took out a collapsible tent and sleeping bags.

The [Storage] scroll was expensive, but it was convenient. Time inside it was stopped, so you could even keep severed animal parts preserved in it.

“Oh? You can use [Storage]? Is that why you weren't worried about meals before?”

“Yeah, we can eat freshly prepared meals like this.”

Gesunoh took out some soup, steam still rising from it.

The soup was, however, drugged. It wasn't so much that you would notice after a mouthful or two, but around an hour after finishing it, you would grow numb



and become unable to move.

Feeding them this would make their job easier than just attacking them normally, but—

“Ojou-sama. Please eat what I have prepared. We don’t know if they put anything in that.”

“If you say so, Shina. Gesunoh-sama, please eat that with Kiwami-sama.”

“Oh? Oh well, then.”

Of course it wouldn’t go *that* smoothly.

Gesunoh clicked his tongue. Even so, they wouldn’t have any problems if they just attacked them during their sleep. He decided to wait for night.

## Chapter 289: Rookie Hunting (4)

It was hard to keep track of time inside a dungeon, but you could know if it was day or night. This was because dungeons also darkened at night. Unless you had the [Night Vision] skill, it was difficult to move around at night.

During one of those dark nights. Mai and the other two had let down their guard and fell asleep in the tent Gesunoh prepared for them.

Holding no lighting, Gesunoh and Kiwami stood in front of their tent. The two tents were a little ways away from each other. Their reason for standing there was, of course, in order to attack.

“Sorry for the intrusion...”

With that whisper, Kiwami stealthily entered the tent. Although the inside wasn’t too large, it was large enough for three or four people. Mai and Shina were asleep on their bedrolls, with the beastkin pet asleep in a sitting position in the corner.

She glances at the pet. She’d appeared to be asleep, but their eyes met.

“Ya know, I won’t do anything if you keep quiet, yeah?”

“...”

Looking uninterested, the pet just kept staring at Kiwami.

“I knew it.

Smiling, she took a collar from the pouch at her waist—a slave collar. She then placed it around the neck of the sleeping Shina.

“■■■...■■, ■■■■, ■■■■■■, ■■■—[Illegal Order: 5].”

The collar shined. It was a success. With that, this collar would force her to follow Gesunoh and Kiwami’s orders.

They’d purchased this magic from a shady peddler a while back, it was a spell that made it possible for them to cause a slave’s collar to tighten five times. The slave collar would be unable to be taken off, as how it should be. However, it wouldn’t stop strangling the slave on the fifth use. Because of that, it was a defective spell.

Now that the biggest hindrance was out of the way, it was time for them to have some fun.

“Darling, it’s time for fun.”

“Thanks, honey. Love ya.”

When Kiwami called for Gesunoh, he entered the tent.  
With that, Mai stirred.

“Mmm... huh—Kiwami-sama? Eh, wh-why is Gesunoh-sama here?”

“Finally awake, Ojou-sama?”

“I’m here so that I can *escort* you ladies, kukuku.”

Gesunoh smiled. It wasn’t the kind smile he’d displayed back at the guild, but a distorted smile, one that caused people to feel uncomfortable.

“No way... Shina, wake up! Cut down these ruffians!”

“Mm—O-Ojou-sama! I-I’ll do it right no—w! Guh!”

Her neck wrung, Shina fell prone.

“Hah, what a meager elf. She’s already out with just that teeny bit of strangling? She was seriously your escort?”

“What did you do to Shina!?”

“We just disciplined her a bit with her collar. Come now, we still have the whole night ahead of us. As long as you stay quiet—well, maybe we won’t do anything to this immature brat? I’ve wanted to play around with an elf for a while now.”

Gesunoh looked through Shina’s luggage, felt around for her pouch, and took out her Guild Card.

“—What, you were a D-Rank? Man, I’d thought you were gonna be skilled with you being a guard and all, but I guess we didn’t need to watch out so much for you. Here, honey. A present.”

“Thanks, darling. Love you~”

Kiwami accepted Shina’s Guild Card from Gesunoh.  
Kiwami took out an iron skewer from her [Storage] with several Guild Cards on it already. He then penetrated Shina’s Guild Card, adding it to the decorations.

“Ufufu, my D-Rank collection’s grown a lot~”

Kiwami kept a collection of Guild Cards as trophies. They couldn't be used for anything and just took up space in her [Storage], but Kiwami herself just thought of it as a hobby and found it a reasonable thing to do.

“...”

Seeing that, the beastkin pet got up and fished around their luggage. Just as Kiwami started to wonder what she was doing, the beastkin handed her another card.

It was Mai's F-Rank Guild Card.

“What're you doing! Stop this instant!”

“Oh hoh? Looks like she hates you, Ojou-sama, ufufufu.”

Kiwami accepted the card from her, similarly adding it to her F-Rank collection.

Then, the moment she tried to put it back into her [Storage]—

With an incredibly alarming speed, the beastkin pet thrust her hand into the open [Storage]'s hole.

She then grabbed her E-Rank and C-Rank Guild Card collections.

“Wha—!?”

“Any more? ... None at B-Rank, none above. Mm, good.”

She had many F-Rank and E-Ranks in her collections, but she didn't have too many D-Rank or C-Rank cards.

“What the f\*ck are you—”

The moment Kiwami tried to say that, she was thrown down to the tent's floor. She fainted on impact. The beastkin pet then clenched her right hand and punched her forcibly in the face.

“That's enough.”

“Eh, shouldn't we question them for any other victims? I thought you'd enjoy what came after this, in a way?”

“It's fine. We've gathered the victims' cards. That is enough.”

Gesunoh heard a voice come out of nowhere. The pet was responding to that

voice.

*What the f\*ck is going on?*

Gesunoh was incredibly confused, but he managed to come back to himself. Then—

“Don’t move! You know what’ll happen to this Ojou-sama if you move, yeah?”

Saying that, he’d picked Mai up in the crook of his elbow and pointed a knife at her.

Gesunoh’s quick reaction was probably the best thing he could have done.

“What should we do? Meat-senpai.”

“... Perhaps he could be useful for Goshujin-sama somehow?”

“No, no, he knows too much now that he’s touched the body this much.”

“True.”

At least, it would have been the best thing if this situation was like anything Gesunoh could have expected.

He’d intended to buy enough time by taking a hostage to get Kiwami back up and escape the tent.

Moreover, once the beastkin pet’s master died, it would have been freed. With that, he could have used magic on its collar to become her new master... At worst, he would have gained at least enough time to seriously think about his next move.

However.

The slave, a beastkin that should have wanted to have control over its own life and death, was binding Kiwami’s hands and feet of her own volition. She didn’t seem to care about him at all.

“What the hell, seriously what the f\*ck! Release Kiwami! Are you fine with me killing this girl then!?”

“Feel free to do whatever you want with the toy.”

“What did you just say...?”

With that, Gesunoh suddenly realized that something was off. The Ojou-sama hadn’t been asleep, she’d already woken up. Even so, she hadn’t said even a single word since he took her hostage. She hadn’t even moved. She didn’t even appear to be breathing, nor did she seem to have a body

temperature.

At long last, Gesunoh looked down at the [Ojou-sama] in his arm. The person—no, the *thing* he saw there was a wooden doll. Her hair seemed strangely real, but her face was flat. There weren't even eye sockets or a mouth.

The doll slowly moved its head to stare at Gesunoh.

“Hiiii—!?”

Gesunoh threw the doll girl at the slave and ran away at full speed, abandoning Kiwami.

Him throwing the doll at the slave gave him enough time to get out of the tent and run toward the pedestal. To escape from the room, he had to return the magic sword to its spot in the pedestal.

He'd have to get close to the tent again, but he wouldn't be able to escape without doing this first. Despite everything that had happened, Gesunoh was still confident that he could do this with his C-Rank skills.

“What the *fck*, *what the fcking* f\*ck... it was going so well!”

He wondered if he'd done something wrong—well, he obviously had, but he didn't mean it *that* way.

... He felt sorry for Kiwami, but it was for the best for them to break up here. They were monsters in human form. They'd be killed after being caught. They were just mimicking being human...

“... Monsters? Wait, this is a safety zone...”

Which means they were variants? Right, they were variants! Reporting the existence of a variant was the obligation of all adventurers, they'd even be rewarded substantially for the information. Yeah, that's right! He wasn't running away right now, he was strategically withdrawing so that he could report their existence!

Gesunoh plunged the magic sword that had been at his waist back into the pedestal.

“Good, now I can—”

Gesunoh turned around to see his way out.

However, the passage remained blocked off by needles.  
As if he'd been trapped within a monster's mouth.

## Chapter 290: Rookie Hunting (5)

The magic sword was back in the pedestal, but the entrance was still closed.

“Why... this isn’t what happened when we checked it out... it should be open...”

“Oh, that’s weird. We’ll be locked in here over night after withdrawing the magic sword—that’s what you said though? I even took great pains to make that true.”

Upon turning toward the voice he suddenly heard behind him, he saw a silver-haired woman he didn’t recognize.

“Who are you!? How did you get in!?”

“How? There’s obviously only one entrance to this room.”

The woman let out a small laugh.

“Now. This is your end. Thank you for the meal.”

“Wh-What are you...”

Snapping her fingers, the woman caused a rock to fall from the ceiling. Just as as Gesunoh recognized it as a rock trap, the *rock* got up—it was an iron golem.

“No way... this is a safety zone!”

“So what if it is? It’s of no concern to you. You’re about to die.”

He looked up. Doing that, he saw that the ceiling was covered with lumps of iron.

—No way, were those all iron golems?

One of those masses of iron, the one clinging to the roof directly above Gesunoh, moved.

He hurriedly dodged out of the way. It crashed to the ground directly behind him.

“You better watch out, that spot’s not safe either.”

“!?”

Yet another iron golem crash landed in front of him.



Him dodging, having another golem land, and dodging yet again repeated over and over. He slowly ran out of places to escape.

“Uoh, uwaaaah!!”

“Hmm hmmm. This seems to be a fairly effective trap.”

“Dammit! Help me, please! I have money! I’ve left a lot of it with the guild, I’ll even give you all of Kiwami’s toooooooooo!”

Just as Gesunoh finished his plea, the golems stopped falling.

“Hah, hah... I’m, saved...?”

However, the iron golems that had fell began to surround Gesunoh. Even if they were stone golems rather than iron ones, the C-Rank Gesunoh still wouldn’t be able to make it out of this.

Where would he even run to? The entrance was still blocked off by needles either way.

“Rei, why are you playing around?”

“Ah—senpai. I’m not, I’m just experimenting with this trap Master made. I’m definitely not playing around at all, okay?”

The silver-haired woman talked with the beastkin slave as though they knew each other well. Behind the slave was a wooden doll wearing Shina’s clothes. On its neck was the slave collar Kiwami gave her. On her shoulder was Kiwami herself, still unconscious.

Gesunoh finally realized that they’d been set up.

“Dammit... why, why are you looking at me like that!? What did I do to you!?”

“Senpai, what is that thing talking about? You there, were you not hunting rookies?”

“Hunting people that are weaker than you is common sense! I’m not in the wrong!”

“So that’s what you want to say in your current situation? Alright, then.”

Hearing her say that, Gesunoh also realized that he himself was a pathetic, weak thing to the golems hounding him.

How stupid could he be to say that?

“Kiwami, wake up, Kiwamiii! Get up, save me, do somethiing!”

Hearing his voice, Kiwami stirred.

“Uuu... darling? I... ow! Eh, what? What happened?”

“Honey! Kill theeeeeem! Hurry up, don’t hold baaaack!”

Gesunoh shouted four orders to the collar of the doll holding Kiwami. With that, the collar would tighten until it broke the doll’s wooden neck.

As planned, Gesunoh managed to use [Illegal Order: 5]’s effect to destroy its neck.

Its wooden head dropped to the ground. Following that, Kiwami also fell to the ground.

“Kill them! Hurry, do iiiit!!”

“Yeah, I don’t really get what’s happening, but die!”

She quickly cut through the cords restraining her limbs with a small knife she’d had tucked into her sleeves.

Then, following through with her movement, she similarly went at the silver-haired girl with a needle-looking weapon she’d had tucked in her other sleeve.

*She’s dead!*

Gesunoh and Kisumi both believed that to be so, but the attack didn’t hit—it missed... That is, although it had definitely hit its intended location, it passed right through her.

“That was my afterimage.”

“You mean illusion?”

“Ah, no, senpai. We didn’t need to tell them the truth...”

The two had a back and forth, watching Kiwami stumble forward from her attack.

“Wh-What is going on, seriously!? Why are there so many iron go—gehoh!?”

Just as Kiwami, not understanding what was happening at all, was looking looking around to try and catch up, the beastkin slave struck her in her face. Courteously, she did it on the opposite side of her face as last time. Once again, Kiwami fell unconscious.

“I made it more quiet.”

“Good job, senpai. I’m a bit surprised at how your training’s progressed... but still, I wonder why the mannequin golem’s neck broke?”

“I think it has to do with the slave collar’s effect.”

“Well, as for that magic... I’ve received an order from Master. We will question him about it later.”

They continued talking as though nothing had happened. Kiwami’s resistance turned out to be meaningless.

... There was too much of a gap in strength between them. How did this happen to him? Gesunoh felt his mind fall into the abyss.

“Oh, Golem-donos. Please hurry up and seize that *thing* for me.”

The silver-haired girl said it as though she were telling them to pick up garbage from the ground.

Following her orders, the iron golems swarmed Gesunoh.

An indication of being a C-Rank adventurer was being able to take an iron golem on one-on-one.

Gesunoh, one of those C-Rank adventurers, was surrounded by countless iron golems. He desperately tried resisting but was beaten by their iron fists until he crumbled, blacking out.

## Chapter 291: Rookie Hunting (6)

“Uwaaaah! ... Huh?”

When Gesunoh woke up, he was in some stone passageway. Kiwami was with him.

His body didn't hurt and Kiwami's face had somehow returned to normal.

“Huh? ... Oh, so it was a dream. That was a weird one.”

He had no idea why he'd fallen asleep at a place like this, but he figured it was probably due to a trap or something.

Their prey were monsters, the slave was a monster, and there was a silver-haired girl that controlled iron golems. There's no way that had actually happened.

Let alone the fact that there was a literal swam of iron golems. What a horrid nightmare.

Given that his body and Kiwami's face were perfectly alright, it had to have been a dream. He could recall it with far too much clarity, but it was a dream.

*Let's just forget that one.*

Gesunoh told himself.

“Hey, Kiwami, get up.”

“Mmm... what is it, darling? ... Huh?”

Gesunoh shook Kiwami awake, causing her to look about.

“... What happened to the Ojou-sama and her elf guard? And that silver haired girl?”

“H-honey, you had the same dream?”

“Dream...? Right, yeah, it was a dream.”

Kiwami answered, feeling her face.

“So then this is... somewhere you brought me, right, darling?”

“No, I just woke up too. Honey, you don't know where we are either?”

“No clue... we're in the dungeon though?”

Judging from the feeling the area gave off, probably. Maybe part of the

labyrinth?

They suddenly heard footsteps.

*Other adventurers? No, there's too many. And those footsteps sound too heavy...*

"Does that sound like iron golems to you...? And a lot of them..."

"A swarm of iron golems...? Let's get away from here."

Reminding him of the iron golem swarm he saw in his dream, Gesunoh paled. Kiwami also saw a lot of iron golems in her dream, so she chose to run without ridiculing Gesunoh at all. They may have been C-Rank adventurers, but there were only the two of them, after all.

However, Kiwami hadn't noticed it. This door was more gorgeous than the ones other rooms had.

It was this dungeon's boss room. A door that lead them even deeper into hell.

... Inside the room, it was like a castle's audience chamber. However, there was no one in it. Only a treasure chest.

"Kiwami, look! There's a treasure chest."

"Wait up, Gesunoh. It has to be trapped. Let's be careful."

They took its appearance as a silver lining to their situation.

As the two approached the treasure chest, the door they came in slammed closed.

Then—*it* fell down.

*Baaaang!*

A tremor so loud they could feel it in their guts. Having fallen onto the stone pavement, it let out a jarring metallic sound everytime it moved its body. It spread its wings and lifted its head up. Its red eyes devoid of life locked onto the two of them.

It looked exactly like the strongest of all species—a dragon.

**[PULAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!]**

A different metallic noise, one more like a flute sounded out as it roared.

"An iron... dragon!?"

“R-Run away!”

Abandoning the chest, they found a door further in the room after looking for a way out.

The two of them ran to it as fast as they could, but the door was locked.

“Quick, get it open Kiwami!”

“Wait! Crap, I-I can’t open it!”

“Wha—... you’re a scout though!? Just open it, quick!”

“There’s not even a keyhole, how could I!? We’re in a boss room!”

It was a door that wouldn’t open without first defeating the boss.

“I-It’s not my fault! You’re the one that said to come into here!”

“And you agreed!! You’re a warrior, so deal with the dragon!”

“There’s no way I could, it’s a f\*cking *dragon*!”

*Bang, bang.*

The dragon slowly approached them.

They didn’t have time to argue back and forth.

“... Honey, I have an idea. One of us will get its attention while the other runs to the other door.”

“Oh, so that means you’ll be the decoy right, darling?”

“How about we go opposite directions, whichever it follows will be the decoy. Yeah?”

“... Alright.”

And so the two took off to the left and right, running in opposite directions. The dragon headed to Kiwami—

—and struck at Gesunoh with its iron tail. Gesunoh was slow in dodging it due to running, but was about to manage avoiding the blow, when...

“Ugoh!”

The tail changed its trajectory midway as though it had its own set of eyes, knocking Gesunoh over and causing him to lose consciousness.

\*

“Uwaaaah! ... Huh?”

When Gesunoh woke up, he was in some stone passageway. Kiwami was with him.

His body didn't hurt and Kiwami's was sleeping next to him.

"Huh? ... Oh, so it was a dream. That was a weird one..."

He had no idea why he'd fallen asleep at a place like this, but he figured it was probably due to a trap or something.

... Deja vu.

"Hey, Kiwami, get up."

"Mmm... what is it, darling? ... Huh?"

Gesunoh shook Kiwami awake, causing her to look about.

"... What happened to the Ojou-sama and her elf guard? And that silver haired girl?"

"H-honey? Was that a dream? More importantly, you didn't see the dream with a dragon in it?"

"Dream...? Right, yeah, it was a dream... Dragon? No, I didn't"

Kiwami answered, feeling her face.

*She didn't see the dragon? In that case, with what happened there, this is a dream too?*

"So then this is... somewhere you brought me, right, darling?"

"W-Well, lets just get away from here. I'm getting a bad feeling."

"Eh...? Well alright then, how about we hide in that room there?"

The room Kiwami pointed at was the room they were attacked by the dragon inside his dream.

"We should stay away from that room."

"But I can here footsteps, and a lot of them at that..."

Gesunoh heard them too. There were a lot. And they were heavy...

*If Kiwami couldn't remember anything, then maybe it really was a dream? I mean, I should be dead now otherwise.*

Coming to that conclusion, Gesunoh decided to escape into the room.

He couldn't see the treasure chest that had been there, reassuring him that it

was just a dream.

“Don’t let your guard down, honey. Like the ceiling—”

“The ceiling? There’s nothing there. What are you watching out for, darling?”

“A dragon. This is a boss room.”

“... Setting aside the dragon thing, this is possibly a boss room.”

They could see a door leading further in at the end of the room... just like his dream.

“... That door’s locked, probably. No keyhole either.”

“Eh? How do you know?”

“I’m going to keep watch here at the entrance, make sure nothing gets in.”

“Well, okay... but you’re acting weird, darling.”

Then, just as Kiwami started heading to the door at the other end—

**[PULAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!]**

There was a metallic roar, loud enough to hurt their ears. Coming out of seemingly no where, an iron dragon just appeared. It was like he saw in his dream, the same shape and everything.

“Hii... uwaaaaah!”

“Darling!?”

Gesunoh immediately ran away. Deserting Kiwami, he went out of the room —

—and saw countless iron golems waiting outside, blocking the passageway on both sides.

“Please go back inside.”

It was hiding among the golems’ shadows, but the dog-eared slave was there. Gesunoh’s legs trembled.

A fully equipped adult adventurer, trembling before a tan-skinned young girl. It was a strange sight.

“That’s strange, your memory should have been erased... Neru? Did you not do it?”

[I diiiid, but doing it five times in a row is hard. Let alone normally, just



removing the memory of feeling the fear of death is hard at that point.”  
“... I understand. Goshujin-sama still wants us to test the dragon, though.”

Test? Goshujin-sama? What about the blue hair—no, the doll? And the dragon?

His head didn't feel right.

“What's going on!? What is your goal!?”

“Didn't I just say it? We're testing... oh well, let's erase your memory more thoroughly. It's alright, we know from experience that you won't die so long as we heal you. So please don't worry and go challenge the dragon—Neru, possession.”

[Yessss! A possession request! ... Understood, penetrating noooow!]

\*

“Uwaaaah! ... Huh?”

When Gesunoh woke up, he was in some stone passageway. Kiwami was with him.

His body didn't hurt and Kiwami's was sleeping next to him.

“Huh? ... Oh, so it was a dream. That was a weird one... it was a dream, yeah, a dream... huh? What... was I dreaming about...?”

Still confused, Gesunoh decided to wake Kiwami up.

Gesunoh would never know how many times this reoccurred.

## Chapter 292: Rookie Hunting Hunting

I informed the guild about dealing with the two rookie hunters were deep in the dungeon.

Once I handed over the skewered guild cards they had on them as proof, they expressed their gratitude.

By the way, as for their [Collections], I had Meat turn into Succubus Wanko and charm them, causing them to tell us everything.

I didn't know about it when we actually assaulted them, but, obviously, they had G-Rank Cards skewered as well. Three full skewers of them.

... Rather, what was up with the guy keeping body parts for his collection? Stuff like ears, fingers, stuff that stuck out like that. I incinerated them all.

"... Looking at the oldest cards they had, it seemed they traveled through the Holy Kingdom and Daido before coming to the Raverio Empire. They also appear to have killed quite a few people. However, it seems as though none of them were the children of aristocrats that will raise issue with us, so that is one worry out of the way, thankfully."

So that's what the guild was worried about...? Or is it that there not being any dead aristocrats is good?

It appeared as though it was fine to simply say that they couldn't confirm any aristocrats' deaths.

Something like she'd have to do extra work if there were actually any dead aristocrats, I guess.

It looks like I'll even be getting a reward... well, guess I'll accept it.

As an adventurer, I'll have to split it with my cooperators—Maidence and Shikina.

\*

Well, that's why I now have a pair of rookie hunters. I'd told the guild that they died in the dungeon, but I obviously kept them alive.

"So Kehma, how are you going to kill them? You're not going to let them live right?"

“Obviously. They targeted my body pillow, they’ll have to pay with their lives.”

“So will we put them in the human farm that got made a while back?”

Come to think of it, we had one of those, huh. I think I left it to Rei to manage...? I wonder if they’re still alive? We don’t need them anymore with the village and all, huh?

“I’ll have them be dungeon testers.”

“Testers?”

“To keep it brief, I’ll have them simulate boss battles and use them to experiment my traps on.”

The only people that have made it deep enough into the dungeon for the boss room so far was the black wolf Rin and the saintess. Outside of the first four floors meant for rookies, our dungeon is still very lacking in actual testing.

That included the haniwa golem, the iron haniwa golem, and the most recent golem dragon boss I’d built with traps installed in it.

Although I’d been putting them to the test against Meat and Ichika as a temporary measure, I end up having the bosses hold back. I mean, there’s a chance they’d die if I didn’t.

I’m also testing them with golems I don’t need anymore... but really, having them fight against actual humans would be for the best.

In addition to those, I’ve never even tried using the passage that has a hidden glass wall that breaks into an oil pond. Would it actually be effective?

I finally have C-Rank adventurers to try everything out on, so let’s make use of them.

“I’ll even be able to have Meat and Neru practice with the possession.”

The dungeon’s ultimate weapon, Succubus Wanko. I hadn’t tested it out due to how excessive it would be, but I don’t mind giving it a go on these death row criminals of ours.

At any rate, I’d like them to keep testing all these things out without being afraid. If that’s possible with memory manipulation through charm, there’s nothing I won’t throw against them.

Even in the worst case scenario and they attack, given their strength, Meat could easily deal with them.

I'd already had her go out to confiscate that girl's collection and her effectiveness was self-evident.

I also had her take their money and items, so I'll turn that all into dungeon treasure after I look through it.

I'll even be able to figure out how far I can push them to dying before [Healing] stops bringing them back.

I'll get myself as much experience out of the two of them as possible.

\*

While gradually raising the hurdle each time, I had them go against the golem dragon and haniwas, test the traps, and fight against the golems and goblins en masse while I was at it.

It was pretty grotesque, but I was able to get plenty of training in recovery magic. I came to find out that even if their arms broke, it'd be fine as long as it was still attached. It ate through a lot of magical power, but I could even regrow fingers.

They weren't able to move regrown appendages too well after that though, so I suppose rehabilitation would be necessary. But even that problem went away by using charm to implant the concept that it was properly regrown into their minds.

Like seriously. The allpurposeness of charm is nearly at [Create Golem]'s level.

Since I wasn't able to regrow an entire arm, I put a clay golem on the man to act as his prosthetic left arm.

He himself was convinced it was his actual arm because of the charm, so while it did creak a bit, he was able to use it properly. In truth, it was actually pretty scary.

This one was a clay golem, but imagine how crazily effective it would've been if I'd used orichalcum to make the prosthetic? I wouldn't do it, though.

Well, I had them go through this and that... and while I'd planned on having them go through being half-killed, healed, and having their memories erased as many times as they had Guild Cards on those skewers, it looked like I was going to overcome the limits of recovery magic before that.

Now then, I wonder how much longer they'll last~... oh.

Well, the woman just took the golem dragon's breathFire Trap head on. Woah, talk about crispy. Is it because she was already covered in oil? Still though, there's only bone left. She's definitely dead... I'd be freaked out if I could make her live through that.

Must have tweaked the output incorrectly... she was getting a bit rattled in the head after having her memory erased so often though, so oh well.

[Uwaaaaah! No, no, I don't want to diiiiiiie! Geho—wh, wha... my arm... hiiiiii, a golem's arm!? Where's my aaaaarm!?!]

Guess he hit his limit too.

I had the golem dragon behead him.

I got the DP income from them dying. I'd defeated them over and over, so it was just a single digit's worth.

He got cremated after that so he only had bones left too, but... yeah.

"Even if you're dead, I still have a few uses for you two."

And so I took their bones.

I'd been seeing a lot of grotesque stuff with me practicing recovery magic on them, so that's probably why I didn't feel so grossed out by their bones this time. Yeah, that's got to be it.

\*

"Hyah! Eat this!"

"Uoh—!"

A few days later, in the Golen adventurer guild's training plaza. In the plaza were two skeletons serving to act as training partners for rookies.

They were equipped with foam armor. Yeah. I'd turned Gesunoh and Kiwami's skeletons into golems. I used iron to supplement the bones from Gesunoh's missing left arm.

They were now being treated as temporary guild staff to act as anti-skeleton practice.

The veterans seeing skeletons having duels against people with foam weapons scoffed at it, but it was valuable tactical training for the rookies. Our dungeon had a stable number of goblins in it, so there were many rookies

coming here to acquire experience in actual combat. Thanks to that, these skeletons had quickly become popular.

I don't know who named them, but I hear they're calling them [Pooji] and [Rodah]. I don't know what the names mean or which has which name, but maybe they're fallback names like Pochi, Tama, and John Doe?

I talked to Receptionist-san, who was overseeing the training.

"How are the two doing?"

"Oh, Kehma-san. You've found weird things yet again... Slave skeletons?"

"Yeah, I found them pretty far into the dungeon. The fact that it's similar to what the Beddhism scriptures says happens to criminals is merely a coincidence."

As I said, becoming an enslaved skeleton that would labor day and night without pay had become one of the highest punishments in the Beddhism scripture. Like 'oooh, how scary'.

"They work well together, too. They sometimes perform keen attacks, keeping the tension high. If I gave them a rank as adventurers, I would have to say D-Rank, perhaps even C-Rank."

"I see, it looks like they are useful."

"Oh yes, they have been very useful for training... However, those movements, surely they aren't those rookie hunters? But I just get this feeling..."

As expected of Receptionist-san. As keen as ever.

I watched for a bit longer, but the skeletons just punched and beat rookie opponents.

Well, whatever. Having people that killed rookies instead serve to work for their sake from here on is probably for the best.

They could at least work until their bones are ground down to dust.

## Chapter 293: Attack

Today in Golen was peaceful.

The adventurer-cum-farmer villagers were devoting themselves to caring for their fields.

“Man, my field’s doing great today too. Grow big, my lovely cucumbers.”

“Aah, your leaves are shining so fresh today! Don’t be giving anyone sneak peaks of your good stuff, my Radish-chans!”

“Pfft, who’d want to look at your radishes? Follow my elegant potatoes’ example!”

They, who’d obtained the knowledge of [Talking to your plants helps them grow] from the book at the Beddhism Gathering, had begun talking to their beloved vegetables as part of their daily routine.

They’d doubted it at first, but their plants were still alive.

There were plants that moved about to eat people like monsters, so they figured it wasn’t too weird. Deciding to give pouring their love onto their plants a shot and noticing that there truly was a difference, they abandoned any last traces of doubt they had about it.

And, indeed, they grew even more delicious.

So there wasn’t actually a need for them to continue talking to them.

“It’s almost harvest time, huh~”

“Kukuku, I’ll have Kinue-san cook them and get the Sister-sans to nom on my children... no, my *prided* children!”

“Hm? What’s that?”

One of the villagers noticed something up in the sky.

It started out as a small dot, but steadily grew much larger.

Its body was huge and covered with red scales. It had featherless, bat-like wings and a reptilian head, upon which grew huge horns.

It was a red dragon.

“!? A dragon!? We gotta run!”

“Whaaat!? Are you aiming for my field!? You bastard, I’ll drive you away with

my holy radishes! Just you see!”

“You want my cucumbers!? Three of them!? You don’t!? Do you!?”

“Dammit, so you actually want mine!? —No wait, we gotta run, seriously!”

The fire-attributed red dragon, or rather, its body was clad in a fiery blaze. Was it a flame dragon, even more specialized in the fire-attribute than red dragons?

Once the villager got to the point of realizing that, the dragon flapped its wings and stopped mid-air. Following that, it opened its mouth—and breathed.

“Crap! This is the first time I’ve seen it but that’s *definitely* its breath attack! It’s coming!”

“H-Hey, you want me to leave my radishes!? I can get a few more, just give me a sec.”

“You wanna die!? You can grow more radishes! ... Wait, uwaaah!?”

Immediately after—flames covered the ground.

\*

“... And that’s how a part of the village was burned by a dragon.”

“How many were injured?”

“There were none, thankfully. A small mercy.”

“That so?”

I nodded after hearing Village Sub-Chief Wozuma’s debriefing. Well, I already knew since I saw it on the map.

By the way, I’d started wondering if this dragon was going to be another overpowered thing annoying me like Rin, but it flew up to the summit of Tsuia Mountain.

It was probably a field dragon, so Ontentoo’s dungeon should be able to manage... actually, maybe it’ll be hard since they both specialize in fire? Let’s ask him about it later. Oh, maybe it’s Redra’s relative?

“What will we do?”

“Hm? Oh yeah, I guess I’ll check out the actual damage it did first... As for the dragon, well, I’ll think of something.”

Although I went to go see the burned fields after that, the ground wasn’t particularly vitrified.



It just looked like it was burned normally. It'll be able to be reseeded by the evening if I send out golems to plow it again.

"So it was the improved version of a red dragon, a flame dragon? Seriously, if it can just breath out flames like that, it's like it was just playing around or something."

"Oh? Village Chief Kehma, you were familiar with dragons? It's like you're a top class adventurer."

"... Rokuko knows a bit about them. I just heard it from her."

Let's not say anything about me actually knowing a red dragon.

"By the way, why are you crying like you just watched you just watched your daughter get killed?"

"I'm the owner of this field. This place is where I raised and hand-nurtured my radishes... and they're all gone."

"There aren't too many, but I did manage to get a few of my cucumbers to safety! My potatoes were in the ground and just got roasted, so they're roasted and delicious to eat too!"

Oh, so that's why today turned into an all-you-can-eat potato festival? I ate some of them too.

The radish farmer's friends, two others who were similarly affected by the dragon, clapped the radish farmer's shoulders to cheer him up.

"Hah hah hah! This is the the elegance of potatoes! A huge win for potatoes!"  
"By the way, my cucumbers I mixed in with the potato salad tasted great right?"  
"Ya bastards!"

Unexpectedly, it looks like they're doing fine, that's all that matters.

"Rather, none of the radishes are still edible? They're root vegetables, right?"  
"It spoiled my plan to put knee socks onto the younger white radishes though, dammmiiiiit...!"

"You... alright. So that's why you were heading into the dungeon so aggressively recently, you were getting enough for them, huh? Alright, go ahead, you can cry."

... Unexpectedly, it looks like they're doing fine, that's all that matters.

Well, their primary income is from adventuring, so it's not like they'll go broke from their crops being ruined. They could even borrow equipment from the guild...

Rather, from what I got out of their skit from before the dragon attacked, I can't even tell if they're idiots, hard-headed, confused as heck, idiots, have some secret way to survive, or idiots.

"Err, well, it's great that no one died."

"Agreed, Village Chief Kehma. By the way, they're just idiots. Normal adventurers wouldn't have frozen and would've actually ran away. They were saved by the dragon's whims."

"... That so? Oh, their houses burned down as well. Let's allow them to stay at the inn at a discount while their houses are repaired."

"Ah, you won't allow them to stay for free?"

"They won't work if they don't have to pay."

Wozuma looked at me and sighed.

Yep, what's that about me playing innocent? Huh?

"I'm fine, I don't have to work. I'm just a figurehead, after all."

"... I think you work plenty enough though?"

Hahaha, good joke.

Even if you say I'm working, I'm just signing a few documents a day, it's super easy. I've delegated all of the troublesome stuff to everyone else.

My job basically just amounts to making an appearance every now and then, like how I'm out and about because of this stuff.

Yep, being a figurehead is a great job!

"Well, pick yourselves up. You'll be farmers again soon, Golen will help you."

"Village Chief...! I'll do my best to raise my radishes again! I'll definitely put kneesocks on them this time...!"

"Nice. Right, do you have any seeds left?"

"Oh, come to think of it, those went with my house... will I have to leave my field for a while...?"

"Hm? You'd have to leave your field empty? That's no good, how about trying to raise these?"

Pretending to fish around the bag at my waist, I took out sugarbeet seeds from my [Storage]. They were the things I'd gotten frustrated at after trying to use to earn money way back when.

"Oooh... thank you, Village Chief! What sort of seeds are these?"

"They're sugarbeets, they can be used to make sugar. There should be a book in the church on how to do it, so give it a look."

The recipe for that should be in a part of the book that talked about fertilizer that Ichika translated.

"... Village Chief, where did you get seeds like these?"

"That's a Beddhism secret."

"Seriously? Beddhism is the best... thank you! Good Night!"

"Woah, I'm so jealous... Village Chief, please give me some too!"

"Me too! Me Too!"

"I don't mind, but

The cucumber farmer and potato farmer came and asked for some as well, so I gave also gave some to them. They were my leftovers either way, so go for it. Oh, but now I'll have to call all three of them sugarbeet farmers, so how should I split them up...? Eh, whatever.

"As expected of the Village Chief. When did you manage to prepare those?"

"I've forgotten at this point, it's been a while."

Wozuma just shrugged his shoulders in response.

... Did I say something weird?

## Chapter 294: The Dragon's Relationship

A reaction came from [Flame Cavern], the dungeon in Tsuia Mountain, for the first time in a long time.

As dragon-formed Redra rushed down the passage surprisingly quickly despite barely fitting in it, a red dragon was eating magma slimes as though they were snacks.

Well accustomed to the path, she descended the stairs unhesitatingly. The other dragon went down the quickest path it could take to get to the boss room on the fifth floor, looking as though it was accustomed to the route and arriving surprisingly quickly.—Normally speaking, there would be a red minotaur waiting there. Today, however, the red dragon, Redra, someone who was both this dungeon's last boss and dungeon master, was waiting there.

Upon the two red dragons meeting face to face, they both took a deep breath in. It was in preparation for a breath attack—and a serious one at that. Then—

"" GAAAAAAAAAH!! ""

Simultaneously, they both let out a shining, fiery breath as though they'd rehearsed it.

Their white-hot flames clashed, instantly raising the boss room's temperature. Cutting off their breaths after a while, they walked halfway over to each other, leaving their footsteps in the heat-softened stone floor.

Then, they cheerfully bumped each other with their noses.

"Look at you! Your flame's looking good! You haven't shirked your practice huh, Igni!?"

"Of course Mama! Who do you think I am!?"

"My daughter, obviously! Hahaha!"

The dragons bellowed out in high spirits. Their relationship was that of mother and daughter. Redra was the mother, with the flame dragon Igni being the daughter. It had been several decades since they'd last seen each other. Just then, the father—the salamander dungeon core Ontentoo popped up.

"Oh, you're lookin' good eh, Igni."

“I’m back, Papa! Yep, really good!”

With her huge flame dragon body—Ignis charged at Ontentoo. Their size differences was like a minitruck and a bus, but this was the dignity of a father. Ontentoo stood his ground and took her charge, using his tail to help disperse the force of it as his hind legs sunk into the floor.

“Ya’ve gotten bigger since last time, hah. Aren’t ya going to pass up Redra here?”

“Really? Isn’t Mama just getting smaller?”

“I am not! Seriously, young people nowadays just grow up too fast! Well, I guess I’m still young for a dragon though!”

Her head patted by Redra like some kind of hug, Igni giggled like a child.

“Still though, the area’s changed a lot.”

“Yeah, it’s been what, thirty years since ya last came here? ‘Course it’d change. Like that village at the mountain’s base.”

“It was a hundred years ago. Oh right, now that you mention it, I did have a bit of fun with some insects on the way up the mountain! They ran around in such a panic!”

Seeing Igni smile, Ontentoo’s face cramped.

“Oh, err, where exactly are ya saying this happened?”

“About halfway up I guess. They were some clothed, not-burning monkeys They had some little huts so I burned them for a bit too.”

This caused even Redra to realize what happened as well.

“... Hey, 112Ontentoo, by insects, could she mean...”

“Probably. Aaalright, come here for a sec Igni. Ya didn’t forget how to transform riiight?”

“Eh? Papa, what are you... ow ow ow!? Don’t pull on my wings!?”

\*

When I went to listen to what Ontentoo had to say, there was also a child around Meat’s age—with red reptilian scales on her arms and legs and a tail that looked like Ontentoo’s, as if Redra had changed into human form and rolled back her age—with him.

“Sorry, Kehma! Our idiot daughter troubled you!”

And the first thing Ontentoo did was bow his reptilian head.

“Ontentoo, you actually had a kid...? Well, please raise your head.”

“Yeah! She takes after Redra in her cuteness and idiocy...—I mean, her stupidity’s troubling...!”

Looking at me as I scratched my head, Ontentoo bowed again.

In other words, it looks like the flame dragon that burned those fields is Ontentoo’s daughter.

“Papa!? Why’re you bowing your head to an insect like him!?”

“Shaddup you stupid girl! He’s my friend, so bow your head after troubling him!”

“Papa’s friend!? Papa has a friend!? I thought you only ever stayed deep in the rookery or flirted with Mama though!?”

“*That’s* what ya care about!? Papa’s a dungeon core, I can’t just leave whenever!”

At least it looks like they get along well.

“Just to make sure we’re on the same page, Ontentoo, this girl is the dragon that burned my village’s fields?”

“Y-Yeah. All I can do is apologize for your colleagues’ deaths... but if ya want, I can hand ya some DP. Igni—that’s her name. It’s selfish to ask... but please leave her her life.”

“Oh, well, it’s fine. All that happened was some fields and houses burning down, no one died. Taking a child’s life would be way too much anyway.”

“Really? That’s great. One of them silver linings eh?”

Ontentoo let out a relieved sigh. What a good father.

“I don’t have any problems with it if you pay reparations with DP—mm, I really don’t, but...”

“It doesn’t feel like ya want to say it’s fine since it was a kid havin’ some fun. Just say it... how can I make up for it? Is there anythin’?”

“Something troublesome’s happened.”

Yeah, troublesome. Even if I’m just a figurehead, I’m still the village chief.

“I was thinking about putting together a dragon subjugation group.”  
“... Kehma, even if it’s ya, I’ll kill ya if ya aim for my family’s lives. Even if she’s an idiot, she’s still my daughter.”  
“Of course. Anyone would be like that, even me.”  
“What, Kehma, ya’ve had a kid with Rokuko? Kukaka, children are cute yeah?”  
“No no no no, I haven’t. I. Have. Not.”  
“Hmm? Really? I thought humans reproduced quickly though?”

I cleared my throat and brought the conversation back on topic.

“I was thinking that I’d probably put together a dragon subjugation group.”  
“Why though?”

If I had to put it bluntly, it was to get rid of public unease.  
I don’t mind it after talking about what happened with Ontentoo, but there’s no way that humans were a species that would be fine knowing a threat like that’s nearby.  
And so I, burdened by the billboard known as being a village chief, had to cope with the village’s threat.

“... And that’s what’s happened. Just a lot of annoying stuff.”  
“Aah, well, humans are stupid weak alone. Though there are some exceptions.”  
“Which is why I’m going to establish the group... It’ll give me the best control over the situation. Then I’m planning on just saying that we drove back the flame dragon.”  
“I get it.”  
“Hmph! There’s no way insects could beat me, no matter how many of you group together! I don’t know what’s up with you being Papa’s friend or whatever but you’re an idiot!”

Igni interjected, loudly at that. Flames appeared, clinging to her body and raising the room’s temperature.  
Ontentoo promptly knocked her on the head.

“Igni! Kehma’s not fire resistant, restrain yourself!”  
“Agu! ... Sowwy...”

Aah, yeah, please be careful. I’m currently using [Super Transformation] to turn into [Me], so even though I have an extra life, I’d seriously like to avoid

dying.

“By the way, there’s a good chance one of those [Exceptions] will be in the lineup.”

“... Is it that hero that came to our dungeon before? So there’s a chance he’ll be in it too?”

“Moreover, he’s even had a power up since the last time you saw him.”

“Seriously? ... Then even Redra might be in trouble if they go head on.”

“Eh, Mama might not win?... Isn’t that bad?”

Igni finally seemed to have grasped the weight of the situation.  
... Now then, how about we start our preparations?



## Chapter 295: The Day of Departure (One Night Two Days at Most)

Gozoh, the adventurer representative, came to the village chief's office. Putting down the unfinished Beddhist scripture, I listened to what he had to say. The first thing Gozoh opened with was this.

"I'm gonna rout that dragon, Kehma."

"... So there's really no getting around that, huh."

The village's executives had gotten together for a meeting when I was talking with Ontentoo.

"Kehma, you knew?"

"Did you think of anything else?"

"No. We'll have to drive the dragon away or kill it if we can, even if it'll cost us dearly—so, that's why I came to ask you, our village chief, if you knew of a way to decrease the number of sacrifices there'll be... Wozuma said he was sure you'd have a plan, but... do you really have one?"

"I do."

I responded quickly... but wait, Village Sub-Chief Wozuma, what're you on about?

Still though, I have to be confident here.

"Seriously?"

"However, this specific method is my secret. I'd like to keep it to as small a number of people as possible so that it doesn't leak out. In truth, I'd like to keep it to just me, Kuro, and Ichika. We should be plenty."

It's hard to move about with a lot of people. More so when there are secrets to keep. If possible, I'd like to make it done with just us...

"Kehma, even if it's you, there's no way. At least let Roppu and I help."

Tch, so three people taking on the dragon was stretching it too much huh. Not trusting his figurehead of a village chief that far was probably natural, though. Particularly when the only one who could really hold their own in a

straight up fight among us would be Meat. Meat's the strongest adventurer in Golen... a young girl being the village's strongest has got to say something about the village.

"And you should get Setsuna, that part time worker of yours to help out too."  
"... Oh, yeah, I'll have her defend the village."

Come to think of it, Setsuna's a thing that exists, huh. She's an adventurer comparable to Meat... She and her sister know about dungeons and it'd just get confusing and troublesome if I brought her along, so let's keep her on house-sitting duty.

"And there's *him* too yeah? Wataru's going right?"  
"... I'm not planning on sending for him though?"  
"Eh, but I saw him outside the inn a bit ago? You didn't ask him to come?"

Nope, definitely think I'd remember doing that.  
That debtor hero, why'd you have to come so early this month—

"Kehma-san! I just heard, a wild dragon cropped up!?"  
—Ah, speak of the devil. Wataru entered the room, not even bothering to knock on the door first.  
So he's really here... I was hoping it was a false alarm.

"Oh, hey Wataru. Yeah, well, it's not something you need to worry about. It's our village's problem after all."  
"What are you saying! I already feel like a resident here! See!? I have a Beddhist symbol!"

Saying that, Wataru took out a Beddhist symbol from his breast pocket. It was the most supreme type, the gold one. I heard that some merchants and aristocrats had bought some, but you bought one too?  
... Are you planning on buying a matching one for Nerune too? Eh, you already did? Thanks for the patronage~

"Oh, by the way, I've also been spreading the word of Beddhism!"  
Oi, stop being such a busy body!  
"Rather, it's not an exaggeration to say that I, a Gold Beddhist, am practically

already a member of this village's top brass!"

"Gold Beddhist... what? Beddhism is a religion, so you're a believer, not some gym member. We don't make distinctions between followers based on the symbol they buy."

"Okay sure, but I definitely think I can help you! I may act like this, but I'm a hero!"

Sure, that'd normally be right, but it's annoying for me if you just act on your own...

... If that's how you're going to be, guess it's best for me to get you under my thumb at least.

"Alright. Let's include you in the subjugation group then... Gozoh, you agree that we'll be fine with just Wataru and us then yeah? A single hero's got to be worth at least a hundred people."

"Yeah, then let me, Roppu, and Wataru all go with your team."

"Oooh, then this is Team Bacchus' first job! Let's give it our all, Gozoh-san!"

A drinking team? You get along so well. Though really, I guess Gozoh and Roppu will be joining because of that [We].

I didn't think that Gozoh and I were on such different pages with that [We]...

In the end, it was decided that Hero Wataru would join the lineup... Hmm, let's think about it another way. If I figure that I can push all of the merits over to Wataru when push comes to shove, it's not such a bad turn of events. In fact, let's do just that.

... I guess the whole [That flame dragon's still a whelping so my team should be able to handle it ourselves] plan we came up with is going to go to waste. That strong opening and follow-up conversation flow is something only a hero could do.

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Since forming the Flame Dragon Subjugation Group came together quickly, I decided to have us finish up our preparations and go to Tsuia Mountain's summit. Using climbing equipment. We wouldn't have needed to climb all the way up if it weren't for Wataru and Gozoh, but oh well. Let's focus on the reality of it.

“Go for it, village chief! Avenge my radishes!”

“The hero’s here too, so it’ll work out. Maaan, so our village chief’s gonna be a dragonslayer... how prestigious.”

“I wonder how dragon steak tastes? Village Chief Kehma, it’d be great if you brought some treats back...”

The villagers were waving their arms and rooting as we departed. I can’t bring any steak back... Meat? Could you please stop drooling? Beef raised for food is way more delicious. Just because its huge, strong, and rare doesn’t make it tasty.

“Kehma! Are you alright? You didn’t forget anything?”

That voice quieted everyone else down right away. But the person to do it was just Rokuko. Huh? Did something weird happen?

“Hey, Kehma, did you hear me?”

“Huh? Yeah, I heard you, I heard you. Don’t worry, I’m ready.”

“Do you have your weapon? Food? Handkerchief... that Meat’s using right now, right. Here, take mine.”

Saying that, Rokuko took out her lacy white handkerchief from her breast pocket and pressed it against me. It smelled nice and sweet. Ichika *secretly* gave Rokuko a thumbs up. So she’s behind this? I can see you, you know?

“Really, no having an affair with other girls just because I’m not there, alright?”

“Uh-ummm... affair? I’m going on a dragon subjugation though?”

The surrounding villagers all started murmuring when she said affair... Huh? It’s not like they don’t know about Rokuko, she’s definitely interacted with the villagers and adventurers as the inn’s owner and dining hall waitress...

“A-Alright Kehma, set off! ... I-I’ll g-give you a, a... k-ki...! Anyhow! See you soon!”

“Yea—ow, I’m off. Really, that hurts, you don’t have to hit me because you’re embarrassed.”

The red-faced Rokuko was knocking me on the chest with her fists. What’s she doing, seriously? A goodbye kiss? I don’t know who told about that, but

there's no way I'd do that in front of so many people.

And Ichika's dinner is now forfeit.

With all that done, we set off to climb the mountain.

By the way, once I checked with Gozoh on the mountain, the cause of everyone murmuring was, apparently, natural, since Rokuko, my **legal wife** gave me a warning to not have an affair since I was taking **Meat** with me. Apparently. *Apparently.*

That's not it though!? Rokuko's my partner and Meat's my hug pillow though!? I'm not doing anything to feel guilty about though!? ... I'm not, really!